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SUGGESTIONS FOR POPULARIZING CIVIL AVIATION

Prepared by Mrs. Elliott-Lynn

Report read at the 3d International Congress
of Aerial Navigation held at Brussels, October, 1925.

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General Observations

The public generally is taking very little interest in the progress of Civil Aviation, and the time has come to educate the public in aeronautics and to make them realize the far-reaching importance of air transport.

The psychological factor underlying all schemes for popularizing civil aviation is fairly clear. Briefly, the whole problem resolves itself into discovering and applying means for bringing some of the many aspects and effects of civil aviation into the everyday lives of the public. The public must be brought into daily contact with and familiarized with civil aviation, so that the wonder of yesterday becomes the commonplace of today.

The infants of the present time, when they reach maturity, will not have known a time when aircraft were not a common feature of the skyline, and will have no misgivings on the score of safety; they will regard aircraft as flying with the same naturalness, obviousness and security as birds, because they have always been accustomed to seeing them in this light. The problem is to familiarize the present-day adults with aviation to an extent which will produce the same effect being a commonplace feature of everyone's everyday life, as birds or

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railways are.

This can be done by three principal groups of methods:

- A. Bring aviation into daily contact with the public.
- B. Bring the public into daily contact with aviation.
- C. General publicity.
- D. General improvements in the facilities for air travel and air transport, which make for greater convenience of and use by the public.

The following rough outline of suggestions under the headings stated above, may serve to show what is intended.

Section A - Suggestions for Bringing Aviation into the Daily contact with the public.

1. The public must come into familiar contact with aeroplanes every day, it must never be allowed to see a clear sky without them. Aeroplanes should fly over London every day without fail, so that the public may come to look upon the aeroplane as something quite ordinary and commonplace. All civil and service aircraft, except those flying on regular transport routes, should, when passing anywhere near the big towns, be deliberately deviated so as to pass over the towns and get the people used to seeing the sky full of aeroplanes.

2. In Capitals themselves, the words "The Aerodrome" and "Air Port of _____," should appear as frequently as possible. This can be done by placing sign posts along all the main

routes to the aerodrome, in the same way as the Wembley signs are used today.

3. A motor bus service should run to "The Aerodrome;" millions of people in the street would see buses passing and particularly all those using that service for travelling to and fro between places on the route would have the idea flying continually fixed on their minds. Such bus services would be of the greatest utility as a means of transport as well as being an excellent means of continuous suggestion publicity.

4. Although a good deal is being done at exhibitions to get people interested in aeronautics, more might still be done if it were possible to arrange short flights for the public all day long, at some very low figure, say 1/- or 2/6d for a circle around the exhibition with incidentally a fine bird's-eye view of the Capital. At the Leipzig Fair last February, six aeroplanes were used continually from early till late in this way. It is of the utmost importance that such flights should be carried out in modern types of comfortable cabin passenger machines.

5. A Civil Air Transport Exhibition held annually at or near the Aerodrome would do much to foster public interest.

6. An Air Museum or Air Transport Museum should be established in each Capital.

7. Aeroplanes in transit by road anywhere near the Capital or other large towns should be deliberately carted through the main streets of towns.

8. The Lord Mayor's Show should include aeroplanes and items of air transport interest and should feature also the Air Port.

9. All new passenger aeroplanes should be given a name, like ships, and christening ceremonies arranged, preferably at the aerodrome on Saturday afternoons.

10. A permanent "Air Window" should be in every large store, showing types of clothing for women, photographs of machines, etc., etc.

Aection B - Suggestions for Bringing the Public into Daily Contact with Aviation.

1. The greatest necessity is the development of the Aerodrome as a rendezvous and regular "sight" of the Capital by:

- a. Public enclosure to be greatly enlarged and made attractive. Raised terrace at the back with glass veranda at the rear for bad weather; tea garden in enclosure; roof gardens on hangars.
- b. Every Saturday afternoon and on Sundays there must be organized events to see and cheap (1/- or 2/6d) short flights in modern cabin passenger aircraft.

- c. New additions to the fleet must be on view to close public inspection. Press must widely announce the attractions of the week-end at the aerodrome.
- d. Guides should be provided at a small payment to take members of the public around the aerodrome to see and explain the control tower, the lighting, the wireless, to inspect the machines in the hangars and so forth.
- e. In the public enclosure there should be electric signs operated from the control tower, announcing name of aeroplane just arriving or just departing, destination, or where come from, so that visitors can take an intelligent interest in what is going on, instead of standing aimlessly about and being hopelessly bored as they are at present.
- f. A Garden Club at the Aerodrome could be made very attractive, possibly in conjunction with the Aero Clubs.

2. The second requirement is to create new public functions and occasions in connection with Civil Aviation, in order to attract the public into contact with aircraft, e.g.:-

- a. Christening ceremonies to name new aeroplanes.
- b. Presentation of certificates or medals to Civil Pilots who have successfully completed 100,000, 250,000, 500,000 miles, etc.

- c. New popular Saturday afternoon events on which bets can be made, individual challenges and championships introducing the sporting element of horse racing into air events.

Section C - Suggestion for general publicity.

1. A journal dealing with popular aviation should be provided free to every Library in the country and to every Club in the Capital and to a large number of clubs in provincial cities.
2. Street direction signs "To Air Port of Aerodrome," should be erected liberally on routes. Large, bold lettering, artistic and striking designs. Also on all road sign posts within 10-mile radius of the Aerodrome.
3. Motor cars conveying passengers to the aerodrome should be marked boldly "Air Express," or some such distinctive marking which would be conspicuous without being vulgar.
4. On the platforms of railway stations near aerodrome, large notices should be erected with "Alight here for Air Port of Aerodrome;" sign posts must also be erected showing the way to the aerodrome from these stations.
5. An official at the aerodrome should be detailed to watch all arrivals and departures of prominent people, as a matter of regular routine, and should report same immediately

by telephone to the Press for publication as news and society paragraphs - always coupled with the words "Aerodrome," "By Air," etc., - and particular attention should be paid to notifying local newspapers of travellers of local repute (e.g., the fact that "the Mayor of Little Mudville has gone to Ostende by Air for the week-end" is of great value to "The Little Mudville Argus" as a news item and of deep interest to the good citizens of the hamlet, although it has no value at all for the "Daily Telegraph" or "Times").

6. Press publicity for Civil Aviation must be organized:-

- a. Newspapers must give daily a half page or full page to Aviation, just as they do now to Sport, Broadcasting, or shipping, etc. Each day's news of the Air must be massed together in one place in the newspapers where it can be found without laborious search.
- b. The statistics of arrivals and departures, passengers, goods, etc., must appear each week in the daily press, on the Aviation page, in bold type and with comments and comparisons and occasional graphs showing the growth and development, and so forth.
- c. The Press must be instructed about the relative unimportance of individual accidents, and to discriminate between service accidents and civil

aviation accidents. The present publicity is altogether negative in character, the public only hear of aviation in terms of crashes, and nothing appears of the thousands of successful regular journeys. The word "safety" must disappear from the Press in connection with Civil Aviation; the sense of safety must be generated only by indirect suggestion and in all writing taken for granted.

- d. Series of illustrated articles on Notabilities of the Airways, Air Ports, Air Liners of the World, etc., etc.
- e. Instead of cross-word puzzles, have competitions dealing with various aspects of civil aviation, e.g., forecasting next week's air transport figures for passengers, goods, etc. Prizes in all cases (also for other newspaper competitions of all kinds) to be in the form of free tickets for sight-seeing flights or for air journeys over a regular route.

7. The Air Ministry should organize easy competitions in conjunction with newspapers, on subjects dealing with civil aviation developments, air travel, etc. Prizes always in the form of free air travel tickets and tours.

8. Arrangements should be made with the Broadcasting Companies to include General Civil Aviation Notes every day as a regular feature of the News Bulletin broadcasted daily.

9. A great deal can and must be done with the aid of the cinema:-

- a. In the weekly film Gazette and other news films shown at every cinema performance, at least one item dealing with some aspect of civil aviation must appear.
- b. A series of films should be prepared showing typical journeys from and to various European cities.
- c. A series of films required showing the great Cities of the Empire from the air, always with a commercial aeroplane in flight in the picture.
- d. A big film illustrating the development of civil aviation from Leonardo da Vinci to the present day.

10. Invitations should be extended regularly for free flights over the Capital and district in modern passenger aircraft (on Sundays if necessary) to parties of

- a. Members of Parliament.
- b. Cabinet Ministers.
- c. Chambers of Commerce.
- d. Town Councillors.
- e. Pressmen.

- f. Teachers, Lecturers.
- g. School Children.
- h. Teams of Athletes, etc.

11. Members of the Royal Family should make occasional air journeys; also the Foreign Minister and other Government Officials on official missions abroad should go by air whenever practicable.

12. Air Ministry should possess an Air Yacht for official tours of inspection, in the same way that the Lords of the Admiralty use the Admiralty Yacht "Enchantress" in England.

13. Post Office publicity regarding Air Mails wants thoroughly overhauling.

- a. Air Mail Stamps wanted.
- b. Air Mail letter boxes.
- c. Cancellation Stamp publicity.
- d. Staff require instruction in air mail facilities.
- e. Air Mail despatches and information should be published in newspapers daily together with other mail information (e.g., "Times"), showing also in each case time saved if sent by air mail.

14. Posters. In all the Capitals there is hardly a single poster dealing with the advantages of air travel and air freight. Buses, Tubes, etc.

15. Advertising the Airways should be done as far as possible by air. Sky-writing "Go by Air" and similar slogans. Dropping leaflets and pamphlets from aircraft over the capital.

16. Big stores and other big advertisers who get goods by air, should be approached with a view to their including in their press advertisements a reference to the fact that the goods in question came by air.

17. National Air Week. Civil Aviation displays simultaneously in all large towns of the country.

18. Special circulars to Head Masters of Schools to arrange instructive lectures on air transport and travel, children's essays frequently to be set on aviation subjects, lantern slides to be prepared and loaned to schools. School prizes in form of free flight tickets.

19. Air travellers should be encouraged by receiving prizes for biggest annual air travel mileage.

20. In addition to the buildings at the aerodrome, a central building in the town to be provided by the Government for Airway Companies, aircraft manufacturers' offices, agents, etc., all in Air House in some prominent position.

21. Sensational parachute descents (preferably by women - well-known actresses, etc.,) with suitable press work.

Section D - Suggestion for general improvements in facilities for air travel and air transport. Which would make greater convenience of and use by the public.

1. Public telephones are required for use of air travellers close to the point where passenger cars load up. On arrival at aerodrome while waiting for luggage to be loaded on motor cars, and on departure from it while waiting for aeroplane to be ready to start, many passengers desire to telephone to offices and friends in town. At present no facilities; probably the old customs room could be used for this purpose.

2. Only all-metal aeroplanes should be used for passengers; it would greatly encourage air travel if passengers were able to feel that the dreadful fate of being burned to death in the air or after an otherwise quite unimportant crash were guarded against to the greatest possible extent by the use of all-metal aircraft. It is now a matter of common experience that air travellers have far greater confidence in metal machines than in wood and fabric aircraft. Also, in all-metal aircraft smoking is permissible, which is an important item of comfort on long journeys.

3. In all passenger aircraft the seats should have backs sufficiently high to enable the head to be leaned back and supported, so that a passenger can doze in fair comfort - sleep,

where possible, is the best preventative of air sickness. At least one couch, or long seat, should be provided so that a passenger who is really ill may lie down.

4. A very big improvement must be made in the arrangements for booking of seats for air travel. It is difficult to find an air traveller who has not had experience, or more, of dreadful confusion and error in bookings, resulting in delays and confusion which would not be tolerated for a single day in any other form of transport.

5. A great effort should be made to reduce delays at aerodromes, both for arriving and departing passengers. The aeroplane makes the journey from aerodrome to aerodrome short, but often a large part of the gain in time is frittered away by unnecessary delays in getting to and from aerodromes, and waiting about on aerodromes. At junction aerodromes the waiting time must be cut down to that required for filling petrol tank and changing passengers and to enable them to obtain refreshment, for which reason the refreshment room should adjoin the starting ground (at Amsterdam it is 1/4 mile away; at Croydon it is necessary to pass through Customs and Passport barriers to get from the starting ground to refreshment room, etc., etc.). Airways companies' cars conveying passengers to and from aerodromes should be comfortable and fast vehicles, and those running to and from the aerodrome should, by arrangement with the

police, be accorded special preference in traffic, in order to minimize as much as possible the disadvantage of the great distance of aerodromes from the capitals.

6. An Air Traffic Inquiry Office should be opened in the West End by the Air Ministry, where up-to-date and reliable information and literature can be obtained concerning any airway, where posters and correct route maps are displayed and the public instructed regarding the very large air transport and travel facilities that already exist in Europe.

7. A series of International Air Travellers Clubs should be organized in London and important Continental cities.

8. Our lines should collaborate better with foreign systems and the linkage should be more complete and satisfactory so as to enable travellers to utilize all the existing systems in through transit.

9. Services should run from the provincial Towns to the Headquarters aerodrome to enable Midlanders to book through direct. Sleeping cars from towns should be run through to a siding.